4: Cross L-5 (no date) 1948 E16 Slavs E16



uity depended upon itinerant merchants and traders following strategic watercourses. Even far to the eastward, when the Goths invaded south Russian territory, they maintained the same commercial relations with the Roman Empire which had been established earlier by German settlements along its frontier further westward. Caches of Roman coins, dating chiefly from the interval between Trajan and Septimius Severus (98-198 A.D.), which have been found in great profusion on the west bank of the middle Dnieper, show a remarkable expansion of trade with the Roman west in this area during the second and third centuries, hence under the Gothic hegemony and prior to the Slavic dispersion. Once the Goths had entered into relations with Byzantium and the Greek cities on the Black Sea, their interest in trade with the western Roman Empire waned, and from that point the Dnieprian Slavs largely received products of the so-called Gothic type from the barbarized Pontic workshops. As long as the Goths lived among the Slavs, they exercised a direct economic influence upon them, but once they had withdrawn to the coast of the Black Sea after the fall of Ermanaric before the Huns in 370, they ceased to be a significant commercial factor. Even when Byzantine trade set in during the fifth century, its volume was so restricted that from this point to the eighth century there is actually an interval in which the economic relations of the Dnieper valley with the rest of the early medieval world were in abeyance.

This interval coincides with the epoch of large-scale Slavic migration and dispersion. Its conclusion is marked in turn by the stabilization of the Slavs on the Elbe, on the Danube, and in the Balkans; by the temporary elimination of nomadic invaders from the steppes, the economic advance of the Carolingian period, the beginnings of the Viking Age in Scandinavia, and the establishment of Arab control over Oriental commerce. The period from 700 to 1000, though also initiating the gradual withdrawal of the Western Slavs from the Elbe frontier under German pressure, also saw the evolution of all the medieval Slavic states and their advance to the level of